

CLAIMS

1. A method of producing an optical fiber comprising:

disposing a cleaning member on an optical fiber moving path, and

bringing a surface of the moving optical fiber into a physical contact with the cleaning member for cleaning the surface of the moving optical fiber.

2. A method of producing an optical fiber as defined in claim 1, wherein the cleaning member is formed of a porous member.

3. A method of producing an optical fiber as defined in claim 1, wherein the cleaning member is formed of a mesh member.

4. A method of producing an optical fiber as defined in claim 3, wherein the mesh member is formed of a fiber sheet which is formed by knitting fiber threads and the optical fiber is inserted into an interstice of the fiber sheet.

5. A method of producing an optical fiber as defined in claim 4, wherein the fiber sheet satisfies

the relation $F = 0.01 \text{ (mm)}$ and $G = 0.8 \times D$ in which D denotes the outer diameter of the optical fiber, G denotes the mesh size of the fiber thread and F denotes the diameter of the fiber thread.

6. A method of producing an optical fiber as defined in claim 4, wherein a plurality of fiber sheets are laminated in a moving direction of the optical fiber.

7. A method of producing an optical fiber as defined in claim 6, wherein the number of the laminated fiber sheets is preset to establish the relation " $L = 54 \times T - 3.4$ " in which $L \text{ (km)}$ denotes the length of the optical fiber to be cleaned and $T \text{ (mm)}$ denotes the thickness of the laminated fiber sheets.

8. A method of producing an optical fiber as defined in claim 1, wherein the cleaning member is electrically grounded.

9. A method of producing an optical fiber as defined in any one of claims 1 through 8, wherein the optical fiber is passed through the cleaning member prior to detection of uneven spots on the

optical fiber.

10. A method of producing an optical fiber as defined in any one of claims 1 through 8, wherein the optical fiber is passed through the cleaning member prior to coloring of the optical fiber.

11. A method of producing an optical fiber as defined in claim 10, wherein after the optical fiber is passed through the cleaning member, the optical fiber is taken up on a reel and then is subjected to coloring.

12. An apparatus for producing an optical fiber, wherein a cleaning member is disposed on an optical fiber moving path so that the cleaning member is brought into a physical contact with the surface of the moving optical fiber for cleaning the surface thereof.

13. An apparatus for producing an optical fiber as defined in claim 12, wherein the cleaning member is held so that the contact portion of the cleaning member and the optical fiber is movable to a position of normally moving optical fiber by the movement of the optical fiber.

14. An apparatus for producing an optical fiber as defined in claim 12, wherein the cleaning member is elongated due to friction between the cleaning member and the optical fiber so that the contact portion of the cleaning member and the optical fiber is movable in a moving direction of the optical fiber.

15. An apparatus for producing an optical fiber as defined in claim 12, wherein the cleaning member is held to have such a slack that the contact portion which is in a contact with the optical fiber is movable in a moving and radial direction of the optical fiber due to the movement of the optical fiber.

16. An apparatus for cleaning an optical fiber, wherein cleaning member is disposed on an optical fiber moving path so that it is brought into a physical contact with the surface of the moving optical fiber for cleaning the surface thereof.

17. An apparatus for cleaning an optical fiber as defined in claim 16, wherein the cleaning member is held so that the contact portion of the cleaning member is movable to a position of normally moving optical fiber by the movement of the optical fiber.

18. An apparatus for cleaning an optical fiber as defined in claim 16, wherein the cleaning member is elongated due to friction between the cleaning member and the optical fiber so that the contact portion of the cleaning member and the optical fiber is movable in a moving direction of the optical fiber.

19. An apparatus for cleaning an optical fiber as defined in claim 16, wherein the cleaning member is held to have such a slack that the contact portion which is in a contact with the optical fiber is movable in a moving and radial direction of the optical fiber due to the movement of the optical fiber.